Manual for Boards of Examiners

Applies to all University of Groningen Bachelor's, Master's and Research Master's degree programmes

Valid from November 2026 onwards

Table of contents

1 Introduction **3**

2 Boards of Examiners: independence and expertise **5**

2.1 The position of the Board of Examiners within the organization 5
2.2 Independence 6
2.3 Expertise 7
2.4 Conclusion 7

3 Boards of examiners at the University of Groningen **9**

3.1 Appointing Boards of Examiners 9
3.2 Profile of the members of the boards of examiners 9
3.3 Development of expertise 12
3.4 Duties of the Chair and Deputy Chair 13
3.5 Support for the Board of Examiners 13
3.6 Meetings 14

4 Duties of the Board of Examiners **15**

4.1 Duties and powers of the Board of Examiners 15
4.2 Decisions 22
4.3 Processing appeals 23
4.4 Testing and assessment in the accreditation process 24

Appendices **25**

Appendix 1: Differences between OER and R&R 25
Appendix 2: Profile of an assessment expert: 26
Appendix 3 WHW articles relevant to Boards of Examiners 27
Appendix 4: Explanatory notes on test quality 32
Appendix 5: Format for the Board of Examiners annual report 33
Appendix 6: Model rejection decision 35

1 Introduction

The Board of Examiners has an important task to fulfil within the curriculum organization. It is responsible for the quality of examinations and final assessments, and thus that of degree certificates. The Board of Examiners is also the party that monitors compliance with the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER). The Board of Examiners must independently and expertly determine whether each student meets the requirements set by the degree programme for obtaining the degree.

Boards of Examiners have been assigned substantive tasks under the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), whereby it is essential that the board of the institution (Faculty Board) guarantees that the boards of examiners are able to operate independently and expertly. It is also important that the boards of examiners (members) and the faculty boards are aware of the frameworks within which they are required to perform their statutory duties, and act accordingly. The performance of these substantive tasks provides a better quality guarantee for the conferral of diplomas in the Dutch higher education system and a greater guarantee for students and the outside world with regard to the value and validity of diplomas and degrees. Students, researchers, supervisors and other external parties must be able to trust the University of Groningen to award its degrees carefully.

The key part played by the boards of examiners is recognized in the accreditation system. Assessment panels will devote attention to the role of the boards of examiners, the extent to which the boards of examiners are facilitated and how they perform their legal duties. The NVAO accreditation frameworks contain statements concerning both the role and the position of the boards within the Faculty, in relation to a number of standards.[1]

Aim of this manual

This manual aims to inform the curriculum management (i.e. faculty boards, directors of undergraduate and postgraduate studies, programme directors) and boards of examiners of the legal frameworks within which the boards of examiners must operate, and discuss how the relevant processes can be implemented.

Chapter 2 will discuss the concepts of ‘independence’ and ‘expertise’ in more detail, following which Chapter 3 will describe how these concepts can be fleshed out in the context of the institution and the composition of the boards of examiners. Finally, Chapter 4 will discuss the activities of the boards of examiners, listing their legal duties and providing explanatory notes to each of these duties.

This manual is based on the WHW and the decisions of the Board of the University. We have tried in this context to tie in with the working methods of the University of Groningen faculties wherever possible.

[1] See this link: nvao.net/files/attachments/.89/Beoordelingskader_accreditatiestelsel_hoger_onderwijs_Nederland_2018.pdf

This manual will be revised if the findings of boards of examiners, the experiences gained during external reviews and accreditation, implementation of the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders) and the Ministry OCW (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) give reason to do so.

The appendices include among other things relevant WHW articles, an explanation of test quality, an annual report template and an example of a decision regarding a rejected request.

2 Boards of Examiners: independence and expertise

The Board of Examiners is an independent body within the University, and the Act (the WHW) transfers rights and obligations directly to it. We refer to this as attribution. The work of the Board of Examiners has a strongly legal character. The WHW provides the most important framework for the legal actions of the Board of Examiners. It is important here that the Board of Examiners acts as a governing body and operates within an administrative legal framework. The Board of Examiners can only make decisions on the basis of authority ensuing from the Act. If the Board of Examiners is not authorized to do so, then that decision will be annulled.

The law explicitly assigns to the Board of Examiners the task of 'guaranteeing the quality of examinations and final assessments' (Article 7.12b.1 a of the WHW); the most important characteristics of a Board of Examiners are its 'independence and expertise' (7.12a of the WHW). This independence and expertise relate to:

a. the position of the Board of Examiners within the organization
b. the appointment and composition of the members of the Board of Examiners
c. the duties and powers of the Board of Examiners.

This chapter will describe the position of the Board of Examiners within the organization from the perspective of the WHW and further discuss the concepts of 'independence' and 'expertise'. The next chapter will discuss how these concepts are fleshed out within the context of the University of Groningen.

2.1 The position of the Board of Examiners within the organization

The WHW focuses on degree programmes (Article 7.3 WHW). A degree programme is a coherent set of course units focusing on well-defined learning outcomes. Details of each degree programme's goal and content are laid down in the OER adopted by the Faculty Board.

In addition to the Faculty Board, the following three actors are also involved in degree programme quality assurance:

- the Programme Director
- The Programme Committee (PC)
- the Board of Examiners

Each of these persons/committees is appointed or established by the board of the institution. In the case of the University of Groningen, in this context 'board of the institution' means the Faculty Board (Article 9.15 e in conjunction with Article 9.12.2 of the WHW). Accordingly, in this manual, reference will be made to the Faculty Board instead of the board of the institution.

Although programme directors, programme committees, and boards of examiners may be appointed for more than one degree programme, their duties are always defined at individual degree programme level.

The Assessment Committee and Admissions Board may be indirectly involved. These two bodies are not legally required. They perform duties on behalf of the competent bodies (the Board of Examiners and the Faculty Board, respectively) and fall under their responsibility.

The allocation of duties between the Programme Director, Programme Committee, and Board of Examiners is as follows:

- The Programme Director *is responsible* for the design and implementation of the degree programme as set out in the OER and for ensuring that the teaching and the degree programme meet the quality standard.
- The Programme Committee *advises* the Programme Director and the Faculty Board concerning the OER (or its method of implementation) (WHW, Article 9.18 a and b). With the entry into force of the Enhanced Governance Powers (Educational Institutions) Act, the Programme Committee has the *right of consent* regarding certain subjects in the OER as from 1 September 2017.
- The Board of Examiners *assesses* the educational results per individual student within the framework of a degree programme's OER and *guarantees the quality* of the examinations and final assessments (or the organization and procedures surrounding them).

2.2 Independence

2.2.1 Independence in relation to the board of the institution

The Explanatory Memorandum states the following with regard to the independent position of the Board of Examiners in relation to the board of the institution:

'The independent functioning of the Board of Examiners in relation to the Board of the University means that, although the Board of Examiners is appointed by the Board of the University, the institution must enable the Boards of Examiners to perform their duties independently within the institution. This also means, for example, that the Board of the University cannot impose any obligations on the Board of Examiners with regard to the assessment of students. However, the Board retains ultimate responsibility for the quality of education and the awarding of degrees (7.10a.1 of the WHW); a Board of Examiners must operate within the limits of the OER. This also guarantees that the examination method used is in keeping in with the context of the degree programme.'

In other words, the Faculty Board adopts the OER and is, therefore, ultimately responsible for the quality of education. The Board of Examiners assesses whether individual students satisfy the requirements set out in the OER, and if this is the case the institution will award the relevant Bachelor's or Master's degree.

2.2.2 Independence and composition

In addition to independence in terms of the *position in the organization* with regard to the parties responsible for teaching quality (Faculty Board, Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies, Programme Director), the independence of the Board of Examiners must also be reflected in its *composition*.

The Board of Examiners consists of an odd number of members (numbering at least three), including an external member. The inclusion of external members on boards of examiners provides a key guarantee of quality assurance. External members contribute to the level of expertise of the judgement of the Board of Examiners as a whole. External parties can be

drawn from within the institution itself (e.g. a colleague from another discipline) or from outside the institution.

According to the law, members of the board of the institution and others who have financial responsibilities within the institution may not be appointed as members of the Board of Examiners.

In addition, it is important that the legal requirement (Article 7.12a.3. a) is met that at least one member of the Board of Examiners must be associated as a lecturer with the degree programme (or programmes) for which the Board of Examiners was appointed. Thus, within the University of Groningen, it has been established that at least one of the members must be associated with the degree programme (or one of the degree programmes) as a lecturer. A Programme Director or a study advisor for the degree programme may not be a member of the Board of Examiners.

2.3 Expertise

For the quality assurance of the examinations and final assessments, the main thrust of the boards of examiners' responsibility concerns the substantive aspects of examination. This is based on the fact that the Board of Examiners must be given the opportunity to actively contribute ideas about the assessment policy. This requires that the Board of Examiners as a whole must possess wide ranging substantive (and degree programme-specific) expertise, assessment expertise, and a knowledge of the legal framework.

When selecting a Board of Examiners, the Faculty Board can choose to require expertise in all fields for each of the members or to appoint various subject experts and one assessment expert.

However, each member of the Board of Examiners must have at least basic knowledge of the legal framework. The institution is obliged to give the Board of Examiners sufficient opportunity for professional development in this regard. The University of Groningen has responded to this requirement by holding an annual training day and several peer support sessions per year, for members of the Board of Examiners. A Brightspace page has been set up for this purpose. This will make it possible to reach all the members of every board of examiners within the University of Groningen. This page also serves the purpose of enabling people to discuss or share information with one another.

The Board of Examiners may delegate part of its quality assurance duties to an Assessment Committee, as discussed above in Section 2.1. This Committee then performs activities on behalf of the Board of Examiners, and issues advice and reports to the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners remains responsible for this duty. Members of an Assessment Committee must satisfy the same requirements as the internal and external members of a Board of Examiners, including the stipulations concerning incompatibility and independence (see, for example, Section 3.2.3).

2.4 Conclusion

The emphasis on the boards of examiners functioning independently sometimes leads to the interpretation that these boards can impose their 'own' quality criteria on students, lecturers and degree programmes, which could result in the degree programme management and the Board of Examiners opposing each other.

However, this is not the case; the Board of Examiners assesses the quality achieved against the requirements (or quality requirements) and provisions in the OER that has been adopted by the Faculty Board. If the Board of Examiners determines that these requirements or provisions have not been met, their first option is to consult the Programme Director and the Faculty Board. As a last resort, the Board of Examiners can intervene, using the instruments at its disposal. For example, in cases where it cannot be established with any certainty that a student has met all the requirements of the examination. Details of these can be found in the Act and in the OER.

3 Boards of examiners at the University of Groningen

3.1 Appointing Boards of Examiners

As stated in Chapter 2, the Faculty Board appoints a Board of Examiners for a degree programme or cluster of degree programmes. If a Board of Examiners is appointed for a cluster of degree programmes, the Faculty Board is free to decide which degree programmes fall within this 'cluster'.

Boards of examiners can be appointed:

1. for an individual degree programme
2. for a cluster of degree programmes that are *related in content* (this may be a combination of a Bachelor's and a Master's degree programme, but combinations of several Bachelor's and/or Master's degree programmes are also possible)
3. for a University College or Graduate School
4. for an entire Faculty (a 'broad-based' Board of Examiners).

As previously stated, the key criterion when appointing a Board of Examiners is that the members of that Board of Examiners should have sufficient *collective* professional expertise to guarantee the quality of the degree programme (or programmes) for which they are responsible.

Guaranteeing subject-specific expertise is usually no problem in the first two options listed above. In the third and fourth options, however, it could be difficult to guarantee subject-specific expertise if a University College/Graduate School or Faculty hosts a wide range of degree programmes that are not closely related.

In such situations, the Faculty Board may choose to appoint a relatively large Board of Examiners from which an 'executive committee' can be appointed, or to appoint a smaller Board of Examiners that consults subject-specific experts in the field of the degree programme(s).

With an eye to transparent and uniform decision-making, the method of working with advisors of a Board of Examiners of a limited size is preferred, rather than small boards of examiners with sub-committees, the Chairs of which would have their own powers.

The boards of examiners and the degree programmes for which they are responsible are listed in an Appendix to the Faculty Regulations. The Faculty is legally obliged to list the composition (or any changes in the composition) of the Board of Examiners for registration and certification purposes.

3.2 Profile of the members of the boards of examiners

3.2.1 Profile of the individual members

The individual members of the boards of examiners must possess

1. Assessment expertise
   Although assessment expertise can be guaranteed by adding an assessment expert to the boards of examiners, all members of the boards of examiners should ideally have some knowledge of assessment.

2. Knowledge of the degree programme and its structure
   Subject-specific expertise is ensured by appointing at least one member of the academic staff (WP) who is involved in one of the degree programmes. The individual members must also have knowledge of the degree programme and its structure.

Considering the profiling and arguments listed above, the profile for non-external members is as follows. A non-external member of a Board of Examiners:

1. is a member of the academic staff of the University of Groningen;
2. has preferably been involved in teaching in the degree programme(s) for three years or is involved in the development of a new degree programme;
3. has obtained the University Teaching Qualification;
4. will follow a professionalization module within the University of Groningen or elsewhere within the framework of their duties in the Board of Examiners, preferably during the first year of membership.

In addition to these requirements, the Faculty Board may use additional criteria when appointing members, for example the results of curriculum evaluations. Given the nature of the Board of Examiners' role, at least one of its members should be an associate professor or full professor in the relevant degree programme (or programmes). This will enhance the 'weight', authority and status of the Board of Examiners. The lack of an associate professor or full professor on the Board of Examiners has been a recurring point of criticism in external reviews.

Additional conditions may be imposed on the Chair and Deputy Chair (or chairs), e.g. that a Chair should at least be an associate professor or full professor or, in addition to obtaining the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ), has followed additional professionalization modules in the area of assessment.

New members may be recommended to the Faculty Board by the Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies, the Programme Director, the head of the department or the Board of Examiners itself.
However, such recommendations are never binding. At the very least, the Faculty Board guarantees that the Board of Examiners can present its views on the appointment of new members; the Board of Examiners has an advisory role in this regard.

3.2.2 The external member

Appointing an external expert will improve external legitimacy with regard to testing and examinations. Accordingly, the external expert provides an external view of the quality assurance of the assessments and examinations conducted by those degree programmes that fall under the Board of Examiners. The external expert may be a colleague from a different institution or from another discipline within the University of Groningen. It may be someone with expertise in the field of testing, or someone from the professional field (in the Netherlands or abroad).

The external member may not be involved in teaching activities in the degree programme(s) covered by the Board of Examiners. No other criteria have been formulated at University level – members may be either academic staff or not. This gives the Faculty Board ample freedom to draw up profiles, possibly for each individual Board of Examiners, that tie in

optimally with the character and the needs of the relevant degree programme(s). The Board of Examiners may issue advice in this matter if desired.

In view of the external character of the member and the urgent recommendation that the Chair be an associate professor or full professor in the relevant degree programme (or programmes), the external member cannot chair the Board of Examiners. Nor can the external member sign a diploma. To effectively guarantee the quality of a diploma, it is important that the signatories be members with appropriate professional expertise.

3.2.3 Non-eligibility for membership

Members of the board of the institution and others who have financial responsibilities within the institution may not be appointed as members of the Board of Examiners. This also applies to persons who are jointly responsible for the current quality policy or who are members of certain consultative participation bodies. For the University of Groningen, this concerns:

1. members of the Supervisory Board
2. members of the Board of the University
3. deans of Faculty and vice deans
4. directors of University colleges or graduate schools
5. programme directors and directors of undergraduate and postgraduate studies
6. director of business operations/managing directors
7. research directors
8. the Chair of the Programme Committee of the degree programme (or programmes) covered by the Board of Examiners
9. the chairs of University and faculty consultative participation councils
10. study advisors

The first seven officials listed are not eligible for membership because they bear management or financial responsibility for the curriculum. In most faculties, the Research Director is a member of the management team and is thus jointly responsible for the current policy. The Chair of the Programme Committee is excluded from membership because of the difference in duties of the Programme Committee (advisory/consultative participation) and the Board of Examiners (supervisory) in the field of quality assurance. Although all academic staff members of the Programme Committee should ideally be excluded from membership of the Board of Examiners, this would make it impossible for small departments with few staff members to fill both committees. The chairs of the University Council and the Faculty Council are also excluded from membership. Finally, study advisors can never be members of a Board of Examiners due to the conflicts that might arise between the interests of the students and the decisions made by the Board of Examiners. As previously stated, the study advisor can act as a consultant to the committee.

In addition to the officials listed above, the Faculty Board may exclude other officials from membership, stating its reasons. In such cases, this will be set out in the Faculty Regulations.

3.2.4 Appointment of members

The members of the Board of Examiners are appointed by the Faculty Board, on the recommendation of the Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies, the Programme Director, the head of the department, or the Board of Examiners itself. The Faculty Board

assesses whether the candidates meet the required criteria of professional expertise and assessment expertise, and whether they have a knowledge of the legal frameworks. In cases where a nomination was not made by the Board of Examiners, the individual in question is not appointed as a member until the views of the Board of Examiners have been heard. The procedure of appointing the Chair and members of the Board of Examiners is set out in the Faculty Regulations.

Next, a letter of appointment is sent to the candidate. If the appointment (or reappointment) concerns a Chair or Deputy Chair position, this will be explicitly stated in the letter of appointment. If the Faculty Board has reasons for not wanting to appoint the candidate, it will contact the person who recommended the candidate for further discussion. Any rejections must be substantiated.

The Chairship or membership of a member of the Board of Examiners ends immediately when

a. the appointment term expires and the Chair/member in question cannot or does not want to be reappointed
b. the Chair/member takes on a position that is incompatible with membership of the Board of Examiners
c. the employment contract ends (for the Chair/internal members)
d. the Chair/member starts teaching in one of the degree programmes covered by the Board of Examiners (for external members)
e. the Chair/member wishes to terminate their membership;
f. the Chair/member demonstrably acts in contradiction of the legal frameworks and duties of the Board of Examiners and the Faculty Board relieves the chair/member of their duties on substantiated grounds.

It is possible that the Chair or member of the Board of Examiners does not perform properly. In such cases, the only way to terminate the person's membership is via a decision by the Faculty Board, possibly in combination with immediate suspension. Such decisions must be made on an individual basis. Substandard performance of the Board of Examiners or its Chair or a member is usually brought before the Faculty Board by the Board of Examiners or its chair, or by the Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies.

3.3 Development of expertise

The institution must enable the members of the Board of Examiners to further develop their professional skills. At the University of Groningen, this requirement is satisfied in the following ways:

- Upon their appointment, the Faculty Board will give every new member of the Board of Examiners copies of the Manual for Boards of Examiners, the Rules and Regulations (R&R) for Boards of Examiners, and the OER of the degree programme (or programmes).
- Basic training in the field of testing and examination is offered via the University Teaching Qualification programme. In addition, ESI (Education Support and Innovation) offers tailored workshops in the field of testing.
- The University provides its Boards of Examiners with a support network, including peer support and training.

- It is always permitted to follow a course or training programme outside the University of Groningen that can be considered relevant to the functioning of the Board of Examiners.

3.4 Duties of the Chair and Deputy Chair

3.4.1 Duties of the Chair

The Chair of the Board of Examiners:

a. is responsible and accountable for the independent and expert functioning of the Board of Examiners
b. justifies and defends the policy and decisions taken to internal and external parties, including the Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE) and the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State
c. signs degree certificates and diploma supplements
d. issues advice – on behalf of the Board of Examiners – to the Faculty Board regarding the appointment of members of the Board of Examiners
e. prepares meetings together with the secretary or official secretary
f. chairs the meetings of the Board of Examiners.

3.4.2 Duties of the Deputy Chair (or deputy chairs)

The Deputy Chair (or deputy chairs) of the Board concerned will act on behalf of the Chair in the latter's absence and therefore has the same duties and powers as the Chair for the duration of such absence.

3.5 Support for the Board of Examiners

The Faculty Board ensures that each Board of Examiners is supported by an official secretary, who is a member of the academic staff (WP) or administrative and support staff (OBP) of the Faculty. The official secretary is not a member of the Board of Examiners and thus has no right to vote. A non-official secretary (or 'secretary'), in contrast, is appointed as a member of the Board of Examiners.

The secretary or official secretary:

a. prepares the meetings together with the Chair and/or Deputy Chair(s)
b. takes minutes of the meetings of the Board of Examiners and ensures that the approved minutes and decisions are archived
c. draws up annual reports together with the Chair and/or Deputy Chair (or deputy chairs)
d. conducts and monitors correspondence on behalf of the Board of Examiners
e. may process requests from students on behalf of the Board of Examiners if they concern documented standard decisions
f. assesses whether proposed standpoints and decisions by the Board of Examiners are in accordance with the relevant decision-making frameworks, procedures and statutory provisions (e.g. OER, WHW)
g. monitors the procedural progress of decision-making
h. manages the archives of the Board of Examiners
i. supervises the archiving of documents in student files.

3.5.1 Independence of the official secretary

The position of the official secretary is a key point in the context of independence – they must be able to fulfil their duties independently of management (curriculum management). If possible, the official secretary should, therefore, not fall under the supervision of a Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies or a Programme Director.

In addition, it is not desirable to assign the role of official secretary of the Board of Examiners to a study advisor. A study advisor has to represent the interests of students, and this role would be in conflict with the duties of the official secretary of informing students of decisions taken by the Board of Examiners and possibly implementing such decisions. A study advisor can, however, be appointed to the Board of Examiners in an advisory capacity.

3.6 Meetings

The entire Board of Examiners should preferably meet at least twice per academic year. The Chair, Deputy Chair (or deputy chairs) and possibly official secretary will meet more regularly to discuss matters such as requests from students. A Board of Examiners may have an executive committee (see Section 3.1). Although the meetings of the Board of Examiners are in principle closed to the public, The Board of Examiners can invite guests such as study advisors, examiners, the Programme Director, or an expert to attend the meeting (or part of the meeting).

The topics that are eligible for discussion in plenary meetings include:

- checks of the OER
- advice on a degree programme's assessment policy
- adopting the R&R
- approval of assessment forms for the final-year projects of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes
- instances of cheating (or suspected cheating) and/or plagiarism by a student, which affect the assessment of that student's work
- adopting the annual report.

4 Duties of the Board of Examiners

4.1 Duties and powers of the Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is responsible for the quality of examinations and degree certificates. The following duties and powers are therefore legally assigned to the Board of Examiners:

1. Determining, in an objective and expert manner, whether individual students satisfy the conditions set out in the Teaching and Examination Regulations with regard to the knowledge, understanding, and skills required to gain a degree (Article 7.12.2 of the WHW).
2. Assuring the quality of examinations and final assessments (Article 7.12b.1 a of the WHW).
3. Adopting guidelines and directions within the framework of the OER, to assess and determine the results of examinations and final assessments (Article 7.12b.1 b of the WHW).
4. Granting exemptions from one or more examinations (Article 7.12b.1 d of the WHW), as set out in the OER
5. Assuring the quality of the organization and the procedures relating to examinations and final assessments (Article 7.12b.1 e of the WHW)
6. Measures to be taken in the event of cheating (7.12b.3 in conjunction with 7.12b.2 of the WHW).
7. Appointing examiners to take examinations and determine their results (Article 7.12c of the WHW)
8. Issuing the certificate, together with the Diploma Supplement, as proof that the student has passed the final assessment (articles 7.11.2 and 7.11.4 of the WHW).
9. Granting permission to individual students to follow an open degree programme, the final assessment of which leads to the conferral of a degree (Article 7.12b.1 c of the WHW).
10. Issuing a statement of the examinations passed to those who have passed more than one examination, but who cannot be awarded a degree certificate (Article 7.11.5 of the WHW).
11. Annually drawing up a report of activities (Article 7.12b.5 of the WHW).
12. (possibly) Annually issuing advice to the Faculty Board on the Teaching and Examination Regulations.
13. The allocation of provisions to students with a performance disability, subject to the Equal Treatment of Disabled and Chronically Ill People Act (WGBh/cz), as defined in the OER.

Based on these duties and powers, the decisions taken by the Board of Examiners must comply with the rules of administrative law (see Chapter 4.2). The duties and powers of the Board of Examiners are explained in greater detail below. In addition, there are several duties that may not be legally assigned to the Board of Examiners but for which the Board of Examiners may be mandated by the Faculty Board.

4.1.1 Explanatory notes to the duties and powers

1. *Determining, in an objective and expert manner, whether a student has satisfied the requirements specified in the Teaching and Examination Regulations with regard to the knowledge, understanding and skills that are required to be awarded a degree*

This means that the Board of Examiners must assess whether individual students have achieved the learning outcomes of the degree programme, as indicated in the OER. The assessment of whether students satisfy the requirements set out in the OER is translated, among other aspects, into the approval of examination subjects.
The degree can be awarded if a student has passed all of the required individual examinations in accordance with the provisions of the OER and the R&R. The sum of all the learning outcomes of individual course units must result in the achievement of the relevant final learning outcomes. The Board of Examiners may decide that students who have passed all individual course units must sit an additional final assessment. This requirement must be laid down in the OER. In addition, it is wise to exercise restraint with regard to this power, given the independent authority of an examiner on the one hand and the Board of Examiners on the other. After all, the Board of Examiners' role is mainly supervisory in nature.

Within this duty, the Board of Examiners is also the body that, at the request of a student, must assess whether there are special circumstances that justify a deviation from the normal course of events. Special circumstances include, in any case, the circumstances mentioned in the Student Support Fund Regulations, such as illness, pregnancy, family circumstances, elite sports, or a position on a board or participation body.

If the Examination Board decides that there are special circumstances, it may, in certain cases, decide to deviate from the OER. This authority includes, but is not limited to, the application of hardship clauses. Some other examples are: granting permission for adapted examinations or modes of assessment, extending the validity period of exam results, replacing individual course units with different course units with the same learning outcomes or deviating from participation requirements in practical exercises.

With regard to all of the exceptions that the Board of Examiners is empowered to make, the principle is always the same: the Board of Examiners must explicitly motivate that the special circumstances in question justify a deviation from the OER and that the quality and level of the exam or examination will nevertheless be maintained.

2. *Assuring the quality of examinations and final assessments*

Drawing up and implementing an assessment policy is an important way to help assure the quality of examinations and final assessments. Within the framework of assessment quality policy, in 2014 the University of Groningen introduced the 'Aiming for quality and study progress' assessment policy, in which the conditions for assuring test quality were formulated. Each degree programme's assessment policy must satisfy these conditions. Each degree programme's management team is responsible for drawing up and approving its own local assessment policy. Depending on the organization within a Faculty, once a year the assessment policy is approved/confirmed for each degree programme, for each University College/Graduate School, or for the entire faculty. In the context of the Board of Examiners' duties, the Board should ideally advise the management of the degree programme about the assessment policy to be adopted.

In addition, the University of Groningen Assessment Policy states that 'Each degree programme must have a degree-programme assessment plan that reflects the fact that assessment is seen as an instrument for influencing student behaviour and lists both the

parties responsible for its implementation and the method of regular evaluation' (requirement 9).

The Board of Examiners is responsible for assessing the quality of tests in terms of reliability, validity, transparency and feasibility, based on evaluations conducted by the degree programmes. Reports on the annual, systematic evaluations of tests and assessment policy, including theses and other final Bachelor's and Master's projects, are published annually in the Educational Monitor at faculty and degree programme levels.

One course unit that requires special attention when it comes to assuring the quality of examinations is the final Bachelor's or Master's project. In this context, a thesis and/or a placement, also known as a 'proof of competence', generally includes an assessment of most, if not all, learning outcomes. Students must conduct this project individually, which means that a great many lecturers are involved in assessing the students' final attainment level. Quality assurance for this course unit is therefore extremely important. This is why the University of Groningen Assessment Policy sets out that each degree programme must have a protocol that discusses the procedure, supervision and assessment of final-year projects. This manual is submitted to the Board of Examiners for advice within the framework of the faculty and degree programme assessment plans.

In addition, assessment forms must be used when assessing the final products of final Bachelor's and Master's projects. These assessment forms are drawn up by the degree programme management team, after which the Board of Examiners will assess whether the form ties in with the learning outcomes of the course unit under which the final project falls, as well as the learning outcomes of the final project itself.

Procedure in combination with content

Quality assurance of examinations and final assessments has, on the one hand, a procedural aspect (are the Rules and Regulations being adhered to, are the assessment forms being used, etc.). On the other hand, the Board of Examiners is also responsible for content-related matters; is the assessment method consistent with the learning outcomes of the course unit and the degree programme? However, it does not have to do this all by itself; it can make use of advisors or an Assessment Committee to this end.

The Board of Examiners can appoint an Assessment Committee to conduct some or all of these subject-specific duties. However, even if the Assessment Committee does the actual work, the official responsibility for this aspect remains with the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners must see to it that the Assessment Committee fulfils its duties in accordance with the requirements set by the Board of Examiners. After all, the Board of Examiners must answer to the accreditation committee in matters of 'testing and assessment'. The Assessment Committee falls under the responsibility of the Board of Examiners, which means that this Assessment Committee may only issue advice to the Board of Examiners, for example in the form of the evaluation of a test once the results of this test have been determined. Examiners are legally required to provide any information requested by the Board of Examiners (Article 7.12c.2 of the WHW).

Legally required retention period

Since the introduction of the Quality Assurance Reinforcement Act for higher education, all assignments completed within the framework of the final assessment (theses, final-year research projects, final papers or images of such papers, tests) must be stored for at least seven years in either physical or digital form, depending on the preference of the institution. This seven-year retention period will ensure that all final-year projects completed in the period covered by the latest accreditation or assessment of a new degree programme can be perused by the NVAO or the Inspectorate.
This also applies to exam papers, answer sheets, results and exam slips, which can be destroyed after seven years once the visitation round is completed.

3. *Formulating regulations and guidelines within the framework of the OER to assess and determine the results of examinations and final assessments*

In the OER or R&R for the Board of Examiners, the Board of Examiners adopts regulations for assessing and determining the results of examinations, final assessments, and final-year projects. A model R&R has been drawn up to facilitate this. This model contains a number of binding provisions in the R&R; these are identified in the explanatory notes to the model. Ideally, a uniform set of Rules & Regulations should be used within a Faculty, and certainly within a University College or Graduate School. This will contribute to equal treatment of students in similar situations, and thus also to a Faculty's quality policy.

The Board of the University has also decided that an up-to-date and representative 'mock' version of each degree programme's examinations must be made available to students. to give them an idea of the question style and the way the examination will be marked.

The Board of Examiners may also include stipulations in the R&R regarding 'remote' examinations sat elsewhere, to help students abroad avoid study delay due to factors such as differences in academic year plans. The same applies to any online examinations taken. The Board of Examiners will have to include further provisions on this matter in the R&R; these will set out the frameworks within which this is possible, with a view to monitoring the quality of the examinations. The Board of Examiners must also determine whether the online examination achieves the learning outcomes of the relevant course unit, as stated in the OER, as well as the intended learning outcomes to which the examination relates.

4. *Granting exemptions from one or more examinations.*

The Board of Examiners is authorized to grant individual students exemptions from one or more examinations. The manner in which this duty is performed is defined in the R&R of the relevant Board of Examiners. The question of whether an exemption can be granted should be assessed against the OER. Accordingly, it is highly recommended that the grounds for granting an exemption are laid down in the OER of the relevant degree programme.
Article 7.13.2 r of the WHW makes it clear that these grounds may involve any examinations or final assessments previously taken in an institution of higher education, and in knowledge acquired outside the realm of higher education. In general, exemption may be granted if the replacement course unit has roughly the same learning outcomes as the course unit for which exemption is granted. The reasons for granting exemption must be formulated clearly and concisely, and this formulation must be adequately archived.

In addition, the Board of Examiners may decide to list certain course units in the OER, for example course units offered by a partner institution or a joint degree programme, or course

units that are often used to replace regular course units. In such cases a request for exemption may be approved 'automatically'.

In the case of exemptions based on 'EVC certificates' (Recognition of Prior Learning), it is advisable to regularly review the validity and reliability of those certificates.

5. *Ensuring the quality of the organization and the procedures surrounding examinations and final assessments.*

The Board of Examiners acts as a watchdog with respect to the quality of the procedures relating to examinations and (the granting of) final assessments. This includes such considerations as the surroundings in which students sit examinations. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Board to ensure an adequate environment, but the Board of Examiners plays a role in ensuring that this is actually the case. If the Board of Examiners receives signals that there are defects in this area, they must address this with the Faculty Board.

6. *Taking measures in the event of cheating*

The Board of Examiners is the body that is empowered to take measures in instances of cheating (or suspected cheating) and/or plagiarism, and that records details of its course of action in this regard in the R&R. It is advisable to share information on fraud detection and instructions on how to deal with suspected fraud with examiners. The Board of the University has included a definition of cheating in both the Model OER and the Model R&R for the boards of examiners. A provision added to the R&R states that the examination papers must indicate that the University of Groningen holds the copyright for the examinations.

7. *Appointing examiners to set examinations and determine their results*

One important instrument that the Board of Examiners has at its disposal for the assurance of quality in examinations and final assessments is the appointment of examiners. This duty is mandated to the Board of Examiners by law.

The University of Groningen takes the position that every member of staff who has a permanent employment contract and who holds a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ), at the level of full professor, associate professor, assistant professor and lecturer is, in principle, eligible to act as examiner for ***all*** examinations in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in their area of expertise. The reasons underlying this principle are as follows:

- Full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers have sufficient knowledge of the field and, under the current University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) policy, sufficient knowledge of assessment.
- Full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers are competent to act as examiners at all levels (from first year Bachelor's degree programmes to the supervision and assessment of final-year projects in Master's degree programmes).

Despite this principle, the Board of Examiners must still explicitly appoint the examiners (on an annual basis; see below), although a mild assessment will suffice for appointment. The Board of Examiners may determine alternative criteria for candidate examiners who do not satisfy the criteria listed above. The Board of Examiners can distinguish between examiners

who are appointed for all course units in a degree programme or only for specific course units.

The duty of appointing examiners covers not only the act of appointing but also means that the Board of Examiners is authorized to terminate this position for individual examiners in the event of serious irregularities. Needless to say, such a decision may only be taken upon careful consideration.

Explicit appointment of examiners
Explicit appointment of examiners means that a schedule is drawn up on an annual basis setting out which examiner is responsible for which course units. To this end the Programme Director must submit a list for the upcoming academic year to the Board of Examiners for approval, in good time. When checking the list, the Board of Examiners will at the very least assess whether each examiner is competent/authorized to function as an examiner for the course unit in question.

The Board of Examiners will determine which examiners are authorized to supervise placements and theses – also on an annual basis and as part of the list of examiners. Mid-term additions are permitted.

8. *Awarding degree certificates and the accompanying Diploma Supplements to prove that the final assessment was successfully completed*

The Board of Examiners is responsible for awarding degree certificates to students once it has been determined that they have satisfied the requirements (see 1). The Board of Examiners may start the procedure as soon as the student applies for a degree certificate, or the Board can take the initiative itself once it is clear that all requirements have been met. In cases where the Board of Examiners takes the initiative, the student may submit a request to the Board of Examiners to postpone graduation, for example because they want to take another course unit and include this on the Diploma Supplement.

N.B. Signing the degree certificate and Diploma Supplement

The certificate and Diploma Supplement must be signed by the Chair and the Secretary of the Board of Examiners. With this in mind, it may be useful to appoint all members of the Board of Examiners as deputy chair and deputy secretary. In that case, all members of the Board of Examiners can sign the certificates. Please note that it is not allowed for the external member of the Board of Examiners to sign. The degree certificate and Diploma Supplement may also not be signed by staff members who are not members of the Board of Examiners, or by the official secretary.

9. *Granting permission to individual students to follow an open degree programme, the final assessment of which leads to the conferral of a degree*

It follows from the Act that a student has the right to create their own degree programme. The Board of Examiners must approve such open degree programmes to confirm that the programme has the required level and student workload and satisfies the learning outcomes of the degree programme.

The Board of Examiners approves the individual study programme, and determines under which degree programme this study programme falls with respect to the application of the

WHW. This may only be a degree programme for which the Board of Examiners is authorized.
If, given the composition of the open degree programme, a Board of Examiners does not consider itself to be the most appropriate body to decide on approval of the programme, the Faculty Board may appoint a different Board of Examiners to make this decision. The original Board of Examiners may issue advice in this matter. Certain degree programmes may not permit students to draw up their own open degree programmes due to the requirements of the professional field. Such stipulations should be included in the OER.

10. *Issuing statements of examinations passed to students who have successfully completed more than one examination but who cannot be awarded a degree certificate*

The Board of Examiners is authorized to issue statements of examinations passed to students who have successfully completed more than one examination but who cannot be awarded a degree certificate. This may be important for students who are transferring to a different degree programme and qualify for exemptions based on previously earned results on the basis of such a statement. The Board of Examiners must keep a record of who is authorized to sign such statements (the Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies, for example).

11. *Annually drawing up a report of activities*

The Board of Examiners must report its activities to the Faculty Board every year, in the form of an annual report. An annual report template has been created to this end (see Appendix 5). The Board of Examiners' annual report serves a number of purposes:

1. accounting to the Faculty Board (by the Board of Examiners)
2. providing input for possible improvements in teaching quality to the Programme Director, the Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies and the Faculty Board
3. providing management information. This information must always be available during the visitation and accreditation procedure of a degree programme.

In addition, we have attempted to structure the working method in accordance with the PDCA cycle by asking the boards of examiners to include points for special attention for each academic year and to reflect on these. As part of the PDCA cycle, it is advisable to include a look ahead to the future in the annual report or some form of annual plan, which can then be reviewed in a subsequent annual report. It is also recommended that the annual report be discussed with the programme- or faculty board.

12. *Annually issuing advice to the Faculty Board on the Teaching and Examination Regulations*

The Board of Examiners can advise the Faculty Board on the OER for the current year. This way the Board of Examiners can proactively contribute to quality assurance for the degree programme's assessment programme.

13. *Granting provisions to students with a performance disability*

The Equal Treatment of Disabled and Chronically Ill People Act (Wgbh/cz) prescribes that students with a performance disability may not be treated unequally. The Board of

Examiners can decide to adapt examinations to the disability as much as possible, at the request of a student with a performance disability or chronic disease. This request must be supported by advice from a student counsellor at the Student Service Centre (SSC). It is only possible to deviate from this advice if the proposed provision places a disproportionate burden on the curriculum organization, or if this advice affects the essential competencies that are taught in the degree programme.

The principle of disproportionality or reasonableness is not clearly defined, and so the interests of the student and the impact of modifications for the organization of teaching must be weighed up accordingly. A decision whereby the Board of Examiners deviates from the advice of the student counsellor must therefore provide additional justification that clearly demonstrates the weighing of interests.

With regard to examinations for electives taken by students with a performance disability at other degree programmes, the Board of Examiners of the degree programme that sets the examination must comply with the provisions permitted by the Board of Examiners of the degree programme for which the student is registered. In case a student with a performance disability changes degree programmes withing the UG, the following principle applies: the provisions permitted by the Board of Examiners of the previous degree programme, will be adopted by the Board of Examiners of the new degree programme. Deviation from this is possible if the permitted provisions constitute a disproportionate burden on the curriculum organization of if the permitted provisions affect the essential competencies that are taught in the degree programme.

4.2 Decisions

The work of the Board of Examiners has a strongly legal character. The WHW provides the most important framework for the legal actions of the Board of Examiners. It is important here that the Board of Examiners acts as a governing body and operates within an administrative legal framework. This means that the Board's actions can be factual in nature, such as informing a student, and can focus on the legal consequences. This would involve a decision within the meaning of Article 1.3 of the General Administrative Law Act (Awb): a written decision by a governing body, involving a legal act under public law. The decision must focus on the legal consequences, which means that something needs to change with regard to the rights and duties of the subject involved. The Board of Examiners can only make decisions on the basis of a power that ensues from the Act or the OER, such as the duties and powers listed in Article 1.1 of this chapter. If the Board of Examiners is not authorized to do so, then that decision will be annulled. The Board of Examiners is required to decide on many different matters within a reasonable period of time (see Article 4.13 of the General Administrative Law Act) and, in doing so, it must observe the general principles of good administration, in particular the principle of due diligence and the statement of reasons (see Article 4.2.1).

Depending on the type of decision involved, it is sufficient for the matter to be handled by the official secretary, unless it is important that a decision be reached jointly. So-called 'standard decisions', which do not require any interests to be taken into consideration, for example, can be handled by mandate from the official secretary. This is the case, for example, with frequent exemption requests. More serious decisions, with regard to cheating, for example, in which a sanction (which may be substantial) is imposed, are taken by the Board of Examiners (the full membership). It is important for the Board of Examiners to determine in advance, in

the R&R, how the decision will be taken (by mandate or jointly), and which guidelines (or policy guidelines) will be followed.

Decisions by the Board of Examiners as a whole must be taken on the basis of a simple majority vote of the members present. If the vote is tied, the Chair will have the casting vote. Decisions that must be communicated in writing to the party/parties involved must be signed by the Chair or a Deputy Chair. 'Standard' decisions may be signed by the person who approved the request in the form of a scanned signature of or on behalf of the Chair.

In cases where students disagree with the assessment (or substantive assessment) of an examination, the Board of Examiners is not the competent body to deal with such grievances. Awarding a mark (a decision) is one of the examiner's powers against which appeals can be lodged. Boards of Examiners are expected to refer students with such objections to the appeals procedure of the Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE).

A legal remedies clause must be cited in association with any decisions taken by the Board of Examiners and the examiner. It must be clear that the appeals period commences on the date of the decision. If this is not stated, then any appeals made after the deadline has passed can be declared admissible. If details of the appeals period have been indicated, a notice of appeal submitted after this period will (evidently) be declared inadmissible.

4.2.2 Due diligence and the statement of reasons:

Decisions must be prepared with due diligence, taken by a competent person/body, in accordance with the established procedure, involving a careful investigation of the facts and interests, and by both sides of the argument. A statement of reasons concerns the correct presentation of facts and the transparency and comprehensibility of the decision. In the case of a negative decision, the Board of Examiners must provide a clear substantiation of the grounds on which a request is rejected.

4.3 Processing appeals

Students can lodge a notice of appeal with the Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE) within six weeks of the announcement of the Board of Examiners' or examiner's decision. The University of Groningen is legally obliged to set up an accessible facility to this end. Students can submit complaints, appeals, or objections with the University of Groningen's Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights (CLRS).

Before handling the appeal, the CBE will send the notice of appeal to the body (Board of Examiners or examiner) against which the appeal is directed, with an invitation to determine, in consultation with those involved, whether an amicable settlement of the dispute is possible (Article 7.61.3 of the WHW). In the case of an appeal, the principle of hearing and the possibility of settlement must also be tested (due diligence). This can only proceed differently in exceptional cases, i.e. when hearing no longer has added value or when there is so-called 'bound implementation' (*gebonden uitvoering*): if there is no prior reasonable doubt that the objections cannot lead to a different decision.

If no settlement can be reached, the parties are invited to attend a hearing. The CBE will then decide on the notice of appeal. The student can lodge an appeal against the decision of the CBE with the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State in The Hague.

4.3.1 Complaints:

If no individual decision has been made against which an appeal can be lodged, a student can lodge a complaint via the CLRS. Complaints are handled by the Faculty's Complaints Officer. When dealing with a complaint, the Complaints Officer must apply the principle of hearing both sides of the argument: all parties involved must be heard. Any complaints about the procedure associated with – or the quality of – examinations or final assessments must be submitted to the Board of Examiners.

4.4 Testing and assessment in the accreditation process

Examination is part of the quality of the curriculum being assessed in the accreditation process. A fail mark on assessment policy will result in NVAO not granting accreditation to a degree programme.

4.4.1 Degree programme assessments

'Testing and learning outcomes achieved' is included as a separate standard in the current accreditation framework for NVAO degree programme assessments. This standard sets out that the degree programme must have an adequate assessment system and must prove that the desired learning outcomes are realized. During the visit, the panel will view annual reports, the reports of meetings of the Board of Examiners, as well as examples of examinations with corresponding model answers. In addition, the panel will look at a representative sample of final-year projects. If this topic is assessed as 'unsatisfactory', this will result in a negative appraisal by the accreditation panel. Depending on the seriousness of the shortcoming, the NVAO may either grant the degree programme a remedy period of up to two years or decide not to award accreditation.

4.4.2 Institutional Quality Assurance Assessment

In its Institutional Quality Assurance Assessment, the NVAO includes the mission and position of the Board of Examiners in its assessment of the topic of 'Organization and decision-making structure'. The standard is as follows: 'The institution must have an effective organizational and decision-making structure with regard to the quality of its degree programmes, with clearly delineated duties, powers and responsibilities and in which students and staff have a say.'

In addition, Standard 3 of the Institution Assessment states that the institution must have a good idea of the extent to which its view on teaching quality is in fact realized. The NVAO can assess by means of audit trails how these frameworks have been fleshed out or adopted within the degree programmes.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Differences between OER and R&R

The WHW mentions two documents used to set out testing regulations: the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) and the Rules & Regulations (R&R).

The OER is approved by the Faculty Board. It sets out the learning outcomes and content of a degree programme. The following matters related to testing are also set out in the OER:

- number and order of tests
- mode of assessment
- exemptions
- course unit sequencing and entry requirements
- publication of marks and right of perusal
- resits
- validity period of examination results
- provisions for students with a performance disability

The R&R set out how the Board of Examiners handles matters in the field of examinations and final assessments. In accordance with the Act, the Board of Examiners is responsible for the adoption of the R&R.

Appendix 2: Profile of an assessment expert:

- Knowledge and understanding of the field of assessment policy and/or faculty assessment policy
- Knowledge and understanding of the regular quality criteria for tests (validity, reliability, transparency and feasibility)
- The ability to apply the quality criteria to the usual modes of assessment in university education (open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, paper, thesis, oral exam, etc.)
- The ability to assess the quality of formative modes of assessment
- Understanding of the qualities and shortcomings of the regular modes of assessment
- Understanding of the regular methods of pass mark definition
- The ability to perform an elementary item analysis
- The ability to apply elementary analysis to a test result (e.g. link to previous results and curriculum evaluations)
- The ability to provide feedback in an adequate way

Preferably:

- Experience in academic teaching
- Basic knowledge of digital testing

Appendix 3 WHW articles relevant to Boards of Examiners

Text published by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on 22 December 2014.

Article 7.10. Final assessments and examinations

1. Each examination is a test of the knowledge, understanding and skills of examinees, as well as an assessment of the results of this test.

2. The final examination for a degree programme or for the propaedeutic phase of a Bachelor's degree programme will be considered to have been passed once all examinations for the course units that form part of this degree programme or propaedeutic phase have been successfully completed, unless the Board of Examiners has decided that the final assessment will also comprise a test as referred to in the first paragraph to be administered by this Board.

3. The board of the institution is responsible for the practical organization of examinations and final assessments.[2]

Article 7.11. Degree certificates and statements

1. A statement will be issued by the relevant examiner (or examiners) to confirm that a student has successfully passed an examination.

2. A degree certificate will be issued by the Board of Examiners to confirm that a student has successfully passed the final assessment once the board of the institution has declared that the procedural requirements for issuing the degree certificate have been satisfied. No more than one degree certificate will be issued for each degree programme. The degree certificate will list the relevant information, including at least:

a. the name of the institution and of the degree programme, as stated in the register referred to in Article 6.13, this concerns,

b. the course units that formed part of the final assessment

c. where relevant: the qualifications associated with the degree, bearing in mind Article 7.6.1

d. the degree conferred, as referred to in Article 7.10a.1 or 7.10a.2, and

e. the date on which the degree programme was most recently accredited, or the date on which the degree programme successfully completed the assessment for new degree programmes as referred to in Article 5a.11.2, and

f. for joint degree programmes or joint specializations as referred to in Article 7.3b: the name of the institution or, for joint degree programmes, institutions that co-organized the degree programme or specialization.

[2] Added via a Bill for technical improvements to the WHW, Parliamentary Papers 33840

3. Students who qualify for a degree certificate may submit a request to the Board of Examiners to postpone the certificate ceremony in accordance with the rules set out by the board of the institution.

4. When all of the final assessments have been passed, the Board of Examiners will append a Diploma Supplement to the degree certificate. The latter provides information about the nature and content of the degree programme completed. This is particularly useful with a view to the international recognisability of degree programmes. The Diploma Supplement must contain at least the following information:

a. the name of the degree programme and the institution that provides the degree programme

b. whether it concerns a university (WO) or university of applied sciences (HBO) degree programme

c. a description of the content of the degree programme

d. the student workload of the degree programme. The Diploma Supplement will be drawn up in Dutch or English and in accordance with the European standard format.

5. Students who have passed more than one examination and who are not eligible for a degree certificate as referred to in paragraph 2 may submit a request to the Board of Examiners for a document listing the examinations they have passed.

Article 7.12. Board of Examiners

1. Each degree programme or cluster of degree programmes within the institution has its own Board of Examiners.

2. The Board of Examiners is the body responsible for determining, in an objective and expert manner, whether individual students satisfy the conditions set out in the Teaching and Examination Regulations with regard to the knowledge, understanding and skills required to gain a degree.

Article 7.12a. Appointment and composition of the Board of Examiners

1. The Board of Examiners is established by the board of the institution and its members are appointed based on their expertise in the field of the degree programme or cluster of degree programmes involved.

2. The board of the institution is responsible for ensuring that the Board of Examiners can function independently and in an expert manner.

3. When appointing the members of the Board of Examiners, the board of the institution must ensure:

a. that at least one member is a lecturer in the degree programme (or in one of the degree programmes that are part of the relevant cluster of degree programmes)

b. for universities of applied sciences, that at least one member is from outside the relevant degree programme or cluster of degree programmes

c. that no members of the board of the institution or others who have financial responsibilities within the institution are appointed.

4. The board of the institution will consult the members of the relevant Board of Examiners before appointing new members.

Article 7.12b. Duties and powers of the Board of Examiners

1. In addition to the duties and powers set out in Articles 7.11 and 7.12.2, a Board of Examiners has the following duties and powers:

a. quality assurance with regard to examinations and final assessments, without prejudice to Article 7.12c

b. adopting guidelines and directions within the framework of the Teaching and Examination Regulations, as referred to in Article 7.13, to assess and determine the results of examinations and final assessments,

c. the most suitable Board of Examiners may grant permission to a student to follow a degree programme designed by that student, within the meaning of Article 7.3d of the Act, the final assessment of which will lead to the granting of a degree, whereby the Board of Examiners also indicates to which of the institution's degree programmes that programme will be considered to belong when applying the Act

d. granting exemptions for one or more examinations, and

e. ensuring the quality of the organization of and procedures surrounding examinations and final assessments.

2. If a student or external student cheats during an examination, the Board of Examiners may exclude the individual concerned from taking part in one or more examinations or final assessments to be determined by the Board of Examiners, for a period of time also to be determined by the Board of Examiners up to a maximum of one year. In the event of serious cheating, the board of the institution, on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners, may definitively terminate the student's registration in the degree programme.

3. The Board of Examiners will draw up rules for the performance of the duties and exercise of the powers set out in Article 7.12b.1 a, b and d and in Article 7.12b.2, as well as for the measures that they can take in this context. The Board of Examiners can, within conditions that it sets, determine that not every examination must be passed for the final assessment to be passed.

4. If a student submits a request or a complaint to the Board of Examiners that involves an examiner who is a member of the Board of Examiners, that examiner may not participate in the process concerning that request or complaint.

5. The Board of Examiners will prepare an annual report of its activities. The Board of Examiners will present this report to the board of the institution or the Faculty Board.

Article 7.12c. Examiners

1. The Board of Examiners appoints examiners to set examinations and determine results.

2. The examiners shall supply the Board of Examiners with the requested information.

Article 7.13. Teaching and Examination Regulations

1. The board of the institution approves a set of Teaching and Examination Regulations for each of the degree programmes or clusters of degree programmes taught at the institution. The Teaching and Examination Regulations contain clear and adequate information about the degree programme or cluster of degree programmes.

2. Without prejudice to any other provisions in this Act, the Teaching and Examination Regulations set out the applicable procedures and rights and obligations with regard to teaching and examinations for each degree programme or cluster of degree programmes. This includes at least the following:

a. the content of the degree programme and its examinations,

a1. the way in which the teaching in the relevant degree programme is evaluated,

b. the content of the specializations/tracks within a degree programme,

c. the competences in the fields of knowledge, understanding and skills that students must have acquired by the end of the degree programme,

d. where necessary, the organization of practical exercises,

e. the student workload of the degree programme and of each of its course units,

f. further regulations as referred to in Article 7.8b.6 and Article 7.9.5,

g. the degree programmes to which Article 7.5d applies,

h. the number and order of examinations and when they can be taken,

i. whether the degree programme is offered in full-time, part-time and/or dual variants,

j. where necessary, the order in which, the periods in which – and the number of times per academic year that – the opportunity is offered to take the examinations and final assessments, as well as the way in which registration for these examinations takes place, and the applicable standard registration period

k. where necessary, the validity period of successfully completed examinations, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to extend this period,

l. whether examinations are held in written, oral or another form, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to deviate from this in extraordinary cases,

m. the way in which students with a disability or chronic illness are given a reasonable opportunity to take examinations,

n. the public nature of oral examinations, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to decide otherwise in extraordinary cases,

o. the term within which the results of examinations must be announced, and whether and how it is possible to deviate from this,

p. how and when those students who have completed a written examination may peruse their marked examination papers,

q. the way and the period during which interested parties can peruse the questions and assignments set within the framework of a written examination and the norms based on which the examination has been assessed,

r. the grounds on which the Board of Examiners may grant exemptions from one or more examinations on the basis of previously passed examinations or final assessments in higher education or knowledge and skills acquired outside the world of higher education,

s. where necessary, a statement that admission to examinations is subject to the successful completion of other examinations,

t. where necessary, the compulsory nature of practical exercises in order to gain admission to the relevant examination, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to grant exemption from this requirement, possibly with alternative requirements,

u. study progress supervision and individual tutoring, and

v. where relevant, the student selection procedure for special tracks in the degree programme as referred to in Article 7.9b, and

x. the actual design of the curriculum, which in any case includes the offer of pre-Master's programmes.

Appendix 4: Explanatory notes on test quality

Relevant questions relating to the quality criteria reliability, validity, transparency and feasibility

Validity

1. How is the test drawn up in relation to the learning outcomes?
2. Is it based on a test design (e.g. test matrix)?
3. Does the test sufficiently measure the required learning outcomes?
4. Does the test sufficiently reflect the material to be studied?
5. Does the test sufficiently reflect the material discussed in the lectures?
6. Has there been a double check in the creation of the test?

Reliability

7. Does the test include sufficient components to form a reliable impression of the student's competences?
8. Are the questions formulated clearly and unambiguously?
9. Are the assessment criteria formulated clearly and unambiguously?

Transparency

10. Is the mode of assessment clearly communicated at the start of the course unit?
11. Are the assessment criteria clearly communicated to students at the start of the course unit?
12. Is the way the final mark is arrived at clearly explained?
13. Are students clearly informed which minimum requirements they must satisfy in order to pass the test?
14. Is the performance expected from students in the test sufficiently practised during the course unit?

Feasibility

15. Is the test feasible for students in terms of the time available for studying and taking the test?
16. Is the test feasible for lecturers in terms of the number of lecturer hours available?

Appendix 5: Format for the Board of Examiners annual report

The annual report should cover one academic year.

The format of the annual report drawn up by the Board of Examiners can serve various purposes:

1. Accounting by the Board of Examiners

2. Providing input for possible improvements in teaching quality to the Programme Director, the Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies and the Faculty Board

3. Obtaining management information. This information is often requested during degree programme accreditation procedures.

4. In addition, in this format we have attempted to structure the working method in accordance with the PDCA cycle by asking the Boards of Examiners to include points for special attention for each academic year and to reflect on these.

5. Composition, scope and performance of the Board of Examiners.

Re. 5: List the composition of the Committee over the past academic year or provide a list members and changes in membership in an appendix. Also state the names of the Chair and the Secretary, and list the degree programmes that are covered by the relevant Board of Examiners. Briefly discuss the performance of the Board of Examiners.

6. Number of meetings and main agenda items

Re. 6: Please state how many meetings the Board of Examiners held in the past academic year and briefly explain the main agenda items that were discussed – in particular the agenda items that discussed new policy or additional guidelines.

Some faculties organize regular Board of Examiners meetings to discuss requests from students as well as plenary meetings (usually at a higher level) to discuss policy-related issues. In this case, please state both the number of regular meetings and the number of plenary meetings.

7. Review of key points formulated

Re. 7: Please provide a brief state of affairs with regard to the points that were marked as points for special attention in last year's annual report.

8. Other decisions/findings by the Board of Examiners

Re. 8: Please discuss here only those decisions or findings that were not listed as points for special attention in last year's annual report, as the latter should be discussed under point 7. Provide a list of the most important decisions or findings by the Board of Examiners at a level higher than that of individual students. Attention may also be paid here to new topics, such as the practical implications of stipulations in the (Enhanced Governance Act, or findings based on test evaluations.

9. Advice issued on the OER

Re. 9: This point should contain a brief discussion of the advice issued on the OER, if possible indicating whether the advice in question has been adopted.

10. Overview of requests/issues dealt with

Ad 10: Please provide an overview of the number of requests dealt with. An *example* of such an overview is shown below. If trends or deviations from trends can be discerned, please explain these if possible.

a. Category
b. Course unit completed abroad/exemptions/study programme/course unit outside the degree programme
c. Extension of validity period for examination results
d. Complaints about examinations/objections and appeals against marks awarded
e. Requests for dispensation/additional resit due to Bachelor-before-Master rule
f. Reports of cheating or plagiarism
g. Other

11. Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE) cases

Ad 11: An overview of the CBE cases and the results thereof, as well as of any appeals that are pending with the Court or the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State following a CBE case and the results thereof.

12. Any points for special attention for the next academic year.

12: Please list any points for special attention for the next academic year (in accordance with the PDCA-cycle).

Appendix 6: Model rejection decision

Date: .....

Dear ...,

On .....(date)..... you requested that the Board of Examiners .....(complete the request).

The Board of Examiners has decided to reject your request for the following reason (or reasons): The rules that apply to your request are laid down in .....(cite regulation or indicate policy, location of website).... Your situation differs from the requirements set out in the aforementioned rules on a number of points: .....(explain).....

Kind regards,

The Board of Examiners for .....

On its behalf, (Chair/Secretary)

You can lodge an appeal against this decision with the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights (CLRS) within six weeks of the date of this decision via: www.rug.nl/studenten/clrs or via CLRS, P.O. Box 72, 9700 AB Groningen